

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 170755

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TO USLO PEKING

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJECT: ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXHIBITION

REF: PEKING 798

1. NATIONAL GALLERY, FREER, AND DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVES HAVE REVIEWED INFORMATION AVAILABLE, INCLUDING CATALOGUES, AND ALL CONCLUDE THAT TOKYO SHOW WOULD BE INADEQUATE.

2. PARIS SHOW HAS RECEIVED CONSIDERABLE AMERICAN MEDIA PUBLICITY AND SEVERAL PIECES NOW HAVE "STAR" STATUS IN THE AMERICAN MIND, NOTABLY JADE SUIT OF PRINCESS TOU WAN, KANSU WINGED HORSE, AND HAN TOMB UNICOR. TOKYO SHOW HAS LESSER CHRONOLOGICAL AND REGIONAL SCOPE, AND RELIES MORE ON REPRODUCTIONS. WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS, PARIS SHOW CONTAINS ITEMS OF GREATER IMPORTANCE IN EVERY CATEGORY. US PRESS REVIEWS HAVE ALREADY POINTED THIS OUT AND TOKYO SHOW WOULD UNAVOIDABLY STRIKE AMERICAN PUBLIC AS SECOND RATE.

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PAGE 02 STATE 170755

3. IN CHOOSING PARIS SHOW WITH LATE 1974 OR EARLY 1975

OPENING DATE, HOWEVER, WE FACE PROBLEM OF STALENESS WHICH COMES WITH WAITING AT THE END OF A LONG LINE. TO PREVENT SHOW FROM FALLING FLAT, GALLERIES WISH TO AUGMENT PARIS SHOW WITH ADDITIONAL MAJOR PIECES. EXHIBITION WOULD

THEN BECOME NEW SHOW WITH NEW CATALOGUE AND AMERICAN OPENING WOULD BE A PREMIERE. SINCE PARIS SHOW MAY HAVE HAD PREVIOUS NORTH AMERICAN EXPOSURE IN TORONTO, DEPARTMENT AGREES WITH GALLERIES THAT IT IMPERATIVE WE MAKE THIS EFFORT TO COMMAND FRESH PRESS AND PUBLIC ATTENTION. TO AUGMENT PARIS SHOW, FREER AND NATIONAL GALLERY HAVE SELECTED ELEVEN PIECES FROM TOKYO SHOW AS WELL AS TWENTY-ONE OTHER MAJOR ITEMS, SOME RECENTLY DISCOVERED, WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN SEEN OUTSIDE THE PRC, EACH ONE BELIEVED FINER OF ITS KIND THAN ANYTHING IN AMERICAN COLLECTIONS.

4. IN ADDITION, WHILE WE ENTIRELY SYMPATHETIC TO CHINESE CONCERN OVER PROBLEMS OF PACKING, SHIPPING AND SECURITY, WE CONTINUE TO WISH TO PRESS FOR NATIONWIDE EXHIBITION OF SHOW. EXHIBITION IN WASHINGTON ALONE WOULD HAVE LITTLE EFFECT ON LARGE MIDWEST AND FAR WEST CENTERS OF US POPULATION. CHINESE SHOULD BE MADE AWARE OF OUR CONVICTION THAT AUGMENTED PARIS SHOW DISPLAYED AT NATIONAL GALLERY AND METROPOLITAN MUSEUM IN NEW YORK PLUS MIDWEST AND WEST COAST MUSEUMS WILL ADD UP TO ONE OF DECADE'S MAJOR INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL EVENTS.

5. YOU MAY DRAW UPON FOREGOING AS YOU SEE FIT IN INFORMING THE CHINESE OF OUR SELECTION OF THE PARIS SHOW AND OF OUR DESIRE TO STRENGTHEN THE COLLECTION AND SHOW IT NATIONWIDE. TO ASSIST IN DETAILED DISCUSSIONS ON ADDITIONS TO PARIS EXHIBIT, FRANK TENNY, WHO WILL ACCOMPANY PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA TO CHINA, WILL BRING PHOTOGRAPHS AND FULLY-DOCUMENTED LIST OF THE TWENTY-ONE NEW ITEMS, PLUS THE TOKYO ELEVEN. DR. THOMAS LAWTON, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF FREER AND LEADING CHINESE ART EXPERT, HOPES TO BE IN PEKING IN OCTOBER WITH US ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP BEING ORGANIZED BY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 STATE 170755

COMMITTEE ON SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION, AND HE COULD HELP OUT IN TALKS WITH CHINESE IF NECESSARY. RUSH

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